

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED



CON-0790-60

24 March 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Development Branch, DFD  
SUBJECT : Trip Report - [REDACTED]

(CONONA)

1. I have just returned from a one week trip to the West Coast where I visited Vandenburg Air Force Base ("L" Building) and [REDACTED] at Palo Alto. Although the trip afforded me the chance to forsake the snow in the Washington area and enjoy the California sunshine, it was probably the least productive trip in my twenty years of service. After filling my ulcers with several glasses of milk and many of Ed Green's famous Cellulose pills and chasing away my frustration with a fistfull of martinis, I tried to give the problem some serious thought. My only conclusion at this time is that [REDACTED] is again allowing jet flight dates to affect their planning, reasoning, and consideration of all team members concerned. Although I cannot prove it, I have the distinct feeling that if LNSD had properly evaluated the situation on the fifteenth, my continued stay on the West Coast or Ed Green's useless trip on Sunday night and to Santa Maria on Monday morning would not have been necessary.

2. During the course of this trip, I had planned to accept units 1056 and 1057 in accordance with LNSD's request. This was not possible for several reasons, and many of these reasons seem to substantiate my comments above. Since I had planned to spend Monday, 21 March, at Vandenburg to review their loading procedure, I planned, per LNSD's request, to accept 1056 and 1057 on Tuesday, 22nd March. Due to the cancellation of 1055 and my trip to Vandenburg, I attempted to accept one or both of the above units on Monday, 21st March; however, I was unable to due to lack of documentation, and 1056 was scheduled to go through the [REDACTED] chamber that afternoon. I was informed that documentation would be ready and available on Tuesday, 22nd March, for acceptance. On the morning of the 22nd, it was found that a breakdown had occurred in the [REDACTED] chamber and 1056 would not be ready for acceptance till late Tuesday night. Rather than delay my return trip to Washington another day, I suggested that I accept 1056 down at the base when accomplishing the loading of 1055 and asked to proceed with the acceptance of 1057. Again, however, it was found that the GE rocket programmer had not been checked out and acceptance of this complete unit could not be

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made. I again suggested that acceptance of this unit, as well as 1056, be accomplished at Vandenburg. In order to expedite acceptance at Vandenburg, I decided to review all documentation available on 1056 and 1057. In reviewing these documents, I found both to be incomplete with many errors. All errors and inaccuracies were brought to the attention of [ ] and are to be corrected before acceptance is accomplished at Vandenburg or the [ ]

3. Although the above, together with a possible security violation on the CHALICE program, presents a very bleak picture, all was not lost during the course of the trip. The following items were reviewed and discussed and actions taken as noted:

(A) Polyester film: Both ANSCO and EK polyester film run through an instrument during [ ] tests were inspected, and although either could be used on a flight, EK polyester film, without a doubt, is better than the ANSCO material. Little or no static was noticed in that manufactured by EK. However, considerable static is visible in all material produced by ANSCO. Samples of both items are available in the Development Branch for viewing, if so desired. It is recommended that no further attempts be made to use the ANSCO polyester on any CORONA or CORONA PRIME flights.

(B) Instrument Number Five: In discussing possible uses of instrument No. 5 with [ ] it was learned that LMSD may have two proposed recommendations. They are:

(1) [ ] indicated that BMD and LMSD would probably recommend the use of the bio-used vehicle to fly instrument No. 5. At what point in the overall flying schedule this recommendation would be made for was not clear.

(2) The shocker of this discussion was that [ ] indicated LMSD would probably recommend flying instrument No. 5 in an aircraft within the near future. He informed me that LMSD felt that this would be a very sensible approach since no photographs had ever been made by this type camera in the air. Also, that this would give LMSD a good chance to study the photographs and correct noted discrepancies in the "C Prime" instruments before they are made available for flight. Asked what aircraft he was considering using, [ ] replied "We are thinking of the U-2." I asked if Kelly Johnson was involved, and he said, "Yes." He also indicated that they expected to have drawings of the aircraft in a week or ten days to make their evaluation. Not believing [ ] cleared for CHALICE, I indicated that this program might have merit, then changed the subject. However, I think Security should investigate to determine if a possible violation exists.

(C) Vandenberg Team: The quality, capabilities, and the competence level of the Vandenberg team for unit 1055 was discussed with [redacted] I indicated my concern for the continual changing of teams and team chiefs between flights. I indicated my confidence and the confidence of Headquarters would be much greater if the same team was used to make every unit ready for flight. LMSD indicated they had highest confidence in the present team, since this team had lived with the unit since delivery from the subcontractor. They also indicated that before they could have a permanent team available, they would have to have additional security clearances through Headquarters. They also indicated that previous team chiefs had been promoted and therefore were not available. However, it is believed that due to these discussions, LMSD has decided to send [redacted] as co-team chief for 1055.

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(D) Operation GREEN PASTURES: Processing tests of polyester material at [redacted] will be accomplished from the cassette on unit 1055. This unit will go through [redacted] on 28 March 1960, and material will be at EK on 29-30 March. In order to accomplish the operation, two 1800 foot rolls of polyester at EK must be spliced and shipped to [redacted] by 28 March.

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(E) "L" Building: No arrangements had been made by LMSD to cover the windows at "L" Building during loading operations. This was again brought to the attention of LMSD, and they were asked to correct it immediately. Indications are that operations at "L" Building are again getting sloppy. When 1055 was cancelled, the instrument was left without a cover, and a film spool was found on a bench with an ohm meter piled on top. These conditions were also brought to the attention of personnel at [redacted] for their information and necessary correction. The humidity specifications for the new "L" Building were again reviewed with [redacted] He assured me that present specifications call for not over 50% relative humidity.

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(F) Spiders: Spider requirements for "C" and "C Prime" film spools was reviewed with [redacted] and they were reminded of the agreement reached at the COMNA meeting in December that FCIC would manufacture spiders and ship them to Boston. Indications are spiders have been completed and will be shipped to Boston in time for forwarding to d Green to make 28 March deliveries.

(G) Subcontractor Deliveries: Although previous discussions had indicated considerable slippage in delivery of units from GE, Boston, and New York that would affect the "C" Prime and "A" program, LMSD now feels that they have recovered the possible slippage. Although there is still approximately one week delay from GE and three days delay on items from Boston, LMSD has now indicated they have cut their lead time to 57 days, therefore, not affecting flight dates.

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4. Other items discussed and reviewed during the visit were: operational parameters for ARCON and security of the new ARCON wing at LNSD. Operational parameters and the capabilities for the vehicle to satisfy the ARCON requirements will be resolved at meetings in the immediate future. [redacted] is expected to report on the security of the "A" wing through security channels.

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DEV BR/DPD-DD/P: [redacted]

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